

HOUSE RESOLUTION 249
By Godsey

A RESOLUTION to commend the Reverend Joe Byrd for 55 years of honorable and astute service as the pastor of Bloomingdale Baptist Church.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly are especially pleased to recognize those individuals who have answered a divine call to the ministry and who have served with dedication, vigor, and enthusiasm over the years, performing God's work for their congregations and their communities; and

WHEREAS, one such dedicated pastor is Joseph William Byrd, who has directed the mission at Bloomingdale Baptist Church of Kingsport for five and a half decades; in that role, he has provided guidance and spiritual inspiration to his church members through his wholehearted and dedicated leadership in church and community affairs; and

WHEREAS, born in McDowell County in North Carolina on August 3, 1923, Rev. Joe Byrd is the son of the late Rev. A.R. Byrd, Sr., a well-known Baptist evangelist in East Tennessee and Southwest Virginia from 1930 to 1948, and the former Gussie Katherine Frazier of Scott County, Virginia; he has five brothers and one sister, two of whom are deceased; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Byrd attended West View Elementary School, Sullivan High School, Carson-Newman Preachers' School, and continued his study with course work at the Extension Seminary Department of the Southern Baptist Convention; and

WHEREAS, a courageous veteran of World War II and member of this country's "greatest generation," he served with honor and distinction in England, Wales, France, and Germany with the First Army, earning three bronze stars; Rev. Byrd continues to dutifully serve his fellow countrymen as chaplain of the American Legion Hammond Post No. 3 and Color Guard chaplain, and he has also served as an Auxiliary Probation Officer of General Sessions Court; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Joe Byrd was married to the former Eileen Barker on September 12, 1942; to this blessed union four children were born: two sons, Ronald Lynn and Joseph Stephen; and two daughters, Carolyn Yvonne and Phyllis Teresa; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Byrd was ordained by the West View Park Baptist Church of Kingsport on April 1, 1951, as the pastor of Bloomingdale Baptist Church, his first and only pastorate; upon receiving ordination, he resigned from his post with the Tennessee Eastman Company; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Joe Byrd has been a powerful and positive influence in the Kingsport community, earning well-deserved respect for his fifty-five years of service to Bloomingdale Baptist Church, where the practices and principles of Jesus Christ are at work, and to his fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, over the past half-century, he has officiated 3,320 funerals, averaging 60.3 funerals per year; has performed 1,020 wedding ceremonies, averaging 18.5 per year; and has baptized 984 members, for an average of 17.8 per year; and

WHEREAS, during the last fifty-five years, Rev. Joe Byrd has rendered tireless and faithful service to the Lord, his ministry, and the people of Sullivan County, fulfilling his God-given mission by sharing and living according to spiritual principles; his labors in the Vineyards of the Lord have borne much fruit and are therefore worthy of celebration; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we join with the community of Kingsport and the citizens of the State of Tennessee, as well as with the members of Bloomingdale Baptist Church, in honoring the Reverend Joe W. Byrd for fifty-five years of dedicated and dynamic service to the ministry.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we offer our best wishes to Reverend Byrd for many more happy and productive years in the future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.